



Making Sense of
SCIENCE

Mindsets for Accelerating Learning: **Boost Engagement, Minimize Roadblocks**



Learners who are not engaged or who are experiencing roadblocks during instructional activities are not learning the way they could. While learners can play a role in helping to solve these issues, it is ultimately the responsibility of the facilitator who is supporting learners on their journeys to remove these barriers. When facilitators adopt the mindset of *Boost Engagement, Minimize Roadblocks*, learners become more active participants in learning activities. Tech-enhanced learning especially benefits from this mindset. Learning environments where learners are isolated from each other and the teacher, even by physical space in the same room, can reduce learner engagement, because they remove some of the human element from the environment — an element that some learners crave, an element that can fuel engagement.

Boost Engagement

Honor learners' ways of being and heritage knowledge and culture. Provide time and space for them to collaborate with each other. Allow ample time for participants to process, apply, and reflect on the content covered — not just have content delivered to them. Convey enthusiasm and confidence in learner ability with your facilitation moves, expressions, and body language. Communicate using lots of expression and non-verbal cues. Lean into technological tools to bolster engagement (e.g., annotating shared docs, using chat apps). Reflect on the learning experiences together, refine learning norms together, and plan upcoming learning activities together.

Minimize Roadblocks

Together describe the norms, values, and culture the group wants to create. Do not prioritize your preferences over your learners' preferences unless absolutely necessary. Get to know your learners through authentic interactions, not just "get to know you" assignments. Find out what makes them shutdown. Anticipate and avoid these roadblocks. Calmly respond to unforeseen hiccups and unexpected learning opportunities during instruction to teach your learners that their experience matters more than your plan. Whenever you use technology or a new structure, include space for learners to figure it out before having to use it to learn. Have workarounds in place for learners who have yet to master the needed technologies and structures.

